

REMARKS

Consideration of this application in light of the present amendment is respectfully requested.

Claims 1, 4, 9, 13-16 and 26-27 have been rejected.

Claims 5-8, 10-12, 17-22 and 28-30 are objected to.

Claims 5, 17 and 27 have been canceled, without prejudice.

Claims 1, 6-7, 15 and 26 have been amended.

Claims 1, 4, 6-16, 18-22, 26 and 28-30 are pending in this application.

Formal Matters

Claim 27 has been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicants regard as the invention.

Claim 27 has been deleted thereby rendering this rejection moot.

Substantive Matters

Applicants acknowledge with thanks the Examiner's indication that claims 5-8, 10-12, 17-22 and 28-30 would be allowable if rewritten to include all the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Accordingly, independent claim 1 has been amended to incorporate all of the recitations of claim 5, which is subsequently canceled. Therefore, applicants respectfully submit that amended claim 1 is now allowable.

Similarly, independent claim 15 has been amended to incorporate all of the recitations of claim 1 and 17 (subsequently canceled), hereby incorporated by reference, and is therefore deemed allowable as well for the same reasons. In addition, independent claim 26 has been amended to incorporate all of the recitations of claim 1 and 27 (subsequently canceled), hereby incorporated by reference, and is therefore deemed allowable as well for the same reasons.

Claims 6 and 7 have been corrected for typographical errors.

Claims 6-8 and 10-12 are dependent on newly amended claim 1 and applicants' above comments with respect to claim 1 are hereby incorporated by reference. For the foregoing reasons, claims 6-8 and 10-12 are now deemed allowable.

Similarly, Claims 17-22 are dependent on newly amended claim 15 and applicants' above comments with respect to claim 15 are hereby incorporated by reference. For the foregoing reasons, claims 17-22 are now deemed allowable.

In addition, claims 28-30 are dependent on newly amended claim 26 and applicants' above comments with respect to claim 26 are hereby incorporated by reference. For the foregoing reasons, claims 28-30 are now deemed allowable.

Claims 1, 4, 9, 13-16 and 26-27 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Bird et al (US 6,657,954). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claim 1 has been amended into a condition for allowance as detailed above.

Claim 4, 9, 13 and 14 are dependent on amended claim 1, hereby incorporated by reference, and are therefore deemed allowable as well for the same reasons.

Claim 15 has been amended into a condition for allowance as detailed above.

Claim 16 is dependent on amended claim 15, hereby incorporated by reference, and is therefore deemed allowable as well for the same reasons.

Claim 26 has been amended into a condition for allowance as detailed above.

Claim 27 has been canceled.

Accordingly, applicants respectfully request that this rejection be withdrawn.

The other references of record have been reviewed and applicant's invention is deemed patentably distinct and nonobvious over each taken alone or in combination.

For the foregoing reasons, applicants respectfully request that the above rejections be withdrawn.

Inasmuch as this amendment distinguishes all of the applicants' claims over the prior art references, for the many reasons indicated above, passing of this case is now believed to be in order. A Notice of Allowance is earnestly solicited.

No amendment made was related to the statutory requirements of patentability unless expressly stated herein. No amendment made was for the purpose of narrowing the scope of any claim, unless applicant has argued herein that such amendment was made to distinguish over a particular reference or combination of references.

In the event that the Examiner deems the present application non-allowable, it is requested that the Examiner telephone the Applicants' attorney at the number indicated below so that the prosecution of the present case may be advanced by the clarification of any continuing rejection or through an Examiner's amendment.

Authorization is hereby given to charge any fees necessitated by actions taken herein to Deposit Account 50-2117.

Respectfully submitted,
Barrett et al.

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